Business Plan
2016–2017

Department of
Natural Resources

NOVA SCOTIA

Contents

Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister 1

Department Mandate 2

Government Priorities 3

I. People 3

II. Innovation 4

III. Education 6

Core Services/Responsibilities 7

Departmental Expenses Summary 9

Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

We are pleased to share with you the 2016-17 Business Plan for the Department of Natural Resources. The priorities described in this plan directly support the Government of Nova Scotia's three priorities—People, Innovation and Education— within an overall context of fiscal sustainability and delivering core services efficiently and effectively.

DNR is committed to balancing the economic, environmental, and social benefits of Nova Scotia's natural resources. In 2016/17, we will make further progress on the development of programs, policies, legislation and initiatives that support this objective with a renewed focus on using our natural resources to grow Nova Scotia's economy.

The forest industry has been a staple of our economy for close to a century, particularly in rural Nova Scotia. However, the industry has changed internationally with new markets, new technologies and new products, and we must be innovative and work harder to unlock the value of our forests to remain competitive. We will work on a long-term plan to sustainably transform the industry by maximizing the use of Nova Scotia's wood fibre and ensure its highest value is realized. This work will include exploring innovative ways to expand our forestry sector including a focus on biofuels and working with Innovacorp's innovation hub.

We have a vision for Nova Scotia's mineral sector that revolves around a vibrant, growing mining industry that provides opportunities for exploration, development, training, community development and generation of wealth. To support this, we will place a renewed focus on research and development in the mining sector, and implement a modern and effective Mineral Resources Act that facilitates Nova Scotia's competitive position, while also reinforcing the principles of sustainability. The new Act is the product of several years of work and follows consultations with industry, professional associations, non-governmental organizations, the Mi'kmaq and the public. A modern Act will improve Nova Scotia's competitive position and further support an 'open-for-business' environment for mining in the province and effective community engagement.

During the coming year, our department will make it a priority to implement a comprehensive Crown land-use plan that is informed by the Mi'kmaq and other stakeholders. This important work will have a focus on developing and highlighting economic uses of Crown land, which will include traditional uses of Crown land, as well as blueberry and maple syrup production and other ventures.

Nova Scotians are fortunate to have an extensive coastline, pristine lakes and rivers, scenic views and numerous beaches. Our department, with the Department of Environment, will work to achieve Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act goals by striking the balance between the economic, social and environmental values of Nova Scotia's natural resources.

Honourable Lloyd P. Hines
Minister, Natural Resources

Frank Dunn
Deputy Minister, Natural Resources

Department Mandate

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has broad responsibilities relative to the development, management, conservation and protection of forest, mineral, parks and wildlife resources and the administration of the province's Crown lands.

Services are offered and delivered through five branches: Land Services, Geoscience and Mines, Regional Services, Renewable Resources and Policy, Planning and Support Services.

In 2016-17, DNR will focus on:

- a long-term plan to sustainably transform Nova Scotia's forestry industry and maximize the use of high-value resources,
- an enhanced regulatory framework for mineral exploration in the province,
- comprehensive Crown land-use planning informed by public and First Nations' consultation, and,
- working with Department of Environment to achieve 13 per cent protected land across the province, provided there are no negative recreational or economic effects.

Government Priorities

Government has identified three core priorities – People, Innovation, and Education - to guide and focus government's actions within an overall context of fiscal sustainability and delivering core services efficiently and effectively.

In 2016-17, DNR will undertake key actions in each of the three priority areas to support this work.

I. People

Outcome: Nova Scotia's population is growing, productive and thriving.	
Goals	1. Increase net inter-provincial and international immigration levels. 2. Enhance workforce participation of youth, older workers and marginalized communities. 3. Enhance health and wellness outcomes. 4. Improve communities and social well-being.

In 2016-17, DNR will continue to support the health and well-being of Nova Scotians and the communities in which they thrive through initiatives, programs and services that provide public health and safety information, opportunities for healthy lifestyles, and assistance in overcoming economic, education and equity issues related to natural resources.

To enhance the health and well-being of Nova Scotians, the department's priority actions in 2016-17 will include the following:

- Create and share maps that help Nova Scotians to understand the public health and safety risks of sinkholes, landslides, radon, arsenic/uranium in drinking water, coastal flooding and erosion
- Renew the outreach and engagement programs at the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park and Greenwing Legacy Interpretive Centre to encourage healthy outdoor lifestyles that contribute to skills building and the overall well-being of Nova Scotians
- Assist residents of East Preston, North Preston and Cherry Brook through the land titles clarification process, in collaboration with African Nova Scotian Affairs, the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society and Nova Scotia Legal Aid

Performance Measures	
Indicator	Measure
Public awareness of geological health and safety risk	Increased number of unique webpage views of selected risk assessment maps produced by DNR
Efficient land services	Percentage increase in number of properties in East Preston, North Preston and Cherry Brook for which the land title has been clarified

II. Innovation

Outcome: Nova Scotia has a strong and globally competitive economy and a sustainable, modern government.

Goals

5. Create the climate for private-sector and social enterprise economic growth to support OneNS economic goals.
6. Innovate and achieve sustainable delivery of public services.

In 2016-17, DNR will pursue a collaborative, partner-oriented approach to bring public and private stakeholders together to facilitate the development and expansion of natural resource sectors. The department will drive the economic development of these sectors through long-term plans to sustainably transform industries and maximize the use of high-value resources.

To create the conditions for natural resource businesses to grow and enhance the sustainable delivery of public services, the department's priority actions in 2016-17 will include the following:

Forests

- Complete projects to assess the current state of Provincial fibre supply/cost and identify/qualify target markets for biorefinery products, in collaboration with provincial, federal and private sector partners
- In collaboration with other government departments and agencies, engage with targeted companies to attract biorefinery investment to Nova Scotia
- Implement a forest resource management policy for Crown lands using an ecosystem-based approach to landscape scale planning that will better link silviculture investment to provincial timber objectives
- Implement a standardized approach for the monitoring of Crown land silviculture to ensure compliance with departmental standards

Minerals

- Engage with industry to identify and promote new and under-utilized exploration models in emerging mineral commodities, recognizing new technologies and changes in global commodity prices and demand
- Develop and begin implementing a new Minerals Promotion Strategy to proactively support and promote Nova Scotia's mining industry by:
  - Developing new, web-based tools to increase accessibility and visibility of DNR's geoscience research and provide opportunities for industry to make better investment decisions
  - Expanding and strengthening the Province's visibility at international mining and exploration conferences to attract new minerals investment to Nova Scotia
  - Building stronger partnerships with municipal, provincial and federal government departments/agencies in support of mining-related economic development in the province

- Renew the *Mineral Resources Act* and regulations to demonstrate a more client-centric focus that enables sector growth, cuts red tape and streamlines processes

Crown Lands

- Strengthen land-use planning through sharing and linking of datasets that are made readily available for decision-making by communities, developers, industries and others
- Support innovative governance structures to manage and operate Crown lands that more effectively contribute to rural economic development, such as the Mi'kmaw Forestry Initiative, Medway Community Forest Co-Op, and WestFor Consortium

Parks

- Streamline provincial camping parks operations so they respond to user preferences and align with other jurisdictions

Performance Measures	
Indicator	Measure
Sustainable Wood Supply	Percentage increase in the number and diversity of indicators used to calculate Crown land wood supply
Compliance with Silviculture Standard	Increased alignment between post-treatment silviculture inspections conducted by Crown land licensees and Crown technicians/foresters
Effective Mining Rules and Practices	Industry response (via qualitative interviews) to new streamlined rules and processes for mining companies
Leveraged Innovation in Natural Resource Sectors	Ratio of total partner investment to departmental investment in projects that increase productivity, innovation and global competitiveness of natural resource sectors

III. Education

Outcome: Skilled Nova Scotians drive a knowledge and innovation economy.	
Goals	7. Increase workforce participation and entrepreneurship by improving early childhood and P-12 education 8. Increase workforce participation & entrepreneurship by continually improving opportunities for skills development through post-secondary education, apprenticeship, co-operative education programs and internships.

In 2016-17, DNR will continue to foster future employment opportunities for students interested in working in natural resource sectors. Student employment with the department provides unique experience relevant to working in either public or private sector natural resource settings.

To increase workforce participation in natural resource sectors, the department's priority actions in 2016-17 will include the following:

- Expand skills development and networking opportunities for post-secondary students through co-op, summer employment and internship placements that foster future employment opportunities

Performance Measures	
Indicator	Measure
Students Well-prepared for Employment in Natural Resource Sectors	High satisfaction scores for students involved in co-op/ internship placement/ employment placements for natural resource sectors

Core Services/Responsibilities

Outcome: As the economic driver for forestry, mining, and Crown lands utilization, DNR creates conditions for natural resource businesses to grow sustainably and Nova Scotians to benefit from the province's natural resources.

Goals

1. Sustainable natural resource development that ensures highest economic value
2. Collaborative culture of engagement, innovation and mutual accountability among government, industry and interested groups
3. Strong research capacity and knowledge sharing so that government and interested groups are well informed about issues affecting natural resources
4. Laws and policies are clear and effective tools that oversee the economic, environmental and social supports for shared stewardship of our natural resources

To ensure all Nova Scotians benefit from the health and wealth of the province's natural resources, the department's priority actions in 2016-17 will include the following:

- Unlock the maximum value of Crown lands by tendering available land for alternative uses such as maple syrup or wild blueberry cultivation
- Expand the Mineral Incentive Program to include funding for collaborative industry – university research on the Province's mineral deposits
- Support the development of new innovative products and engineered wood products to diversify markets and increase competitiveness of Nova Scotia's forestry industry, while also providing fibre flow to a potential biorefinery industry
- Work with industry and other government departments to improve performance of Nova Scotian forestry contractors through the Machine Operator Training program which will help prepare a new generation of operators for forestry industry and the emerging bio-economy
- Release the five-year progress report on the Natural Resources Strategy
- Respond to threats from invasive species and support biodiversity in collaboration with other departments
- Monitor spruce budworm levels in Nova Scotia and proactively review management options for the province
- Work with Department of Environment to achieve 13 per cent protected land across the province, provided there are no negative recreational or economic effects
- Apply principles of process improvement models (e.g., Lean) to develop simpler, more consistent processes, faster turnaround and greater employee and client satisfaction in areas such as Crown lands administration, risk management assessment, and occupational health and safety
- Review data collection methods, management and analysis across the department and implement new streamlined processes and technology

- Collaborate with other resource departments to formalize the public participation process
- Develop a predictable, risk-appropriate and modern regulatory regime through legislation review

Performance Measures	
Indicator	Measure
More efficient programs and services	Increased number of staff trained and certified in yellow, green and black belt level Lean/Six Sigma
Effective public participation	Percentage increase in the number of public participation sessions that demonstrate high evaluation scores
Current and effective legislation	Percentage increase in the number of laws and regulations that have been reviewed and, where appropriate, repealed, revised, or updated

Departmental Expenses Summary

Natural Resources Expenses Summary
($ thousands)

Programs and Services	2015-2016 Estimate	2015-2016 Forecast	2016-2017 Estimate
Senior Management	758	770	1,076
Corporate Services Unit	1,157	1,255	—
Renewable Resources	18,689	19,562	24,687
Geoscience and Mines	4,312	4,248	4,394
Regional Services	48,613	48,073	37,006
Policy, Planning & Support Services	4,844	5,007	4,980
Land Services	4,610	4,431	4,344
Total - Departmental Expenses	**82,983**	**83,346**	**76,487**
Ordinary Recoveries	463	1,080	630
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	**706.0**	**703.4**	**631.0**

Notes:

Senior Management: Now includes Occupational Health & Safety
Corporate Services Unit: Transferred to Department of Finance and Treasury Board (12 FTE)
Renewable Resources: Resource Management transferred from Regional Services ($10.3M)
Regional Services: Enforcement transferred to Department of Environment ($5.5M, 57 FTE)
Regional Services: Forest Protection transferred from Renewable Resources ($2.5M)
Ordinary Revenues: See Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2
TCA Purchase Requirements: See Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1